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THE LIGHTER SIDE

... 20, 21 ... (Inside back cover)

Accommodating Learning Disabilities in the English Language Classroom

It is estimated that ten percent of learners have some sort of learning disability; on average, this is two or three students per classroom (Butterworth and Kovas 2013). This means that, inevitably, all English language instructors will encounter students with learning disabilities in their classrooms and could encounter students with learning disabilities in each class. In 2018, we, the authors of this article, conducted a pilot study on learning-disability training for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. All the participants in our study had previously taught or were currently teaching English in EFL contexts. The majority of respondents in our survey (83 percent) indicated they were not confident about their abilities to assist students with learning disabilities. Among the study participants who had received training, the majority (52 percent) indicated their training had been relatively brief—lasting a day or less (Sowell and Sugisaki 2020). This article is a response to the need to provide more information about learning disabilities to English language teachers.

Learning disabilities are complex, and learning how to accommodate them is an ongoing process. We are not experts on learning disabilities. We are, first and foremost, English language instructors who, through our own experiences in various classrooms at various schools, recognize a lack of training and support for assisting English language learners with learning disabilities. We believe it is important to continually advance our knowledge of learning disabilities and effective accommodations as a part of our professional practice.

The purpose of this article is to provide English language instructors with basic

tools for helping English language learners with learning disabilities succeed in the English language classroom. The article first provides a definition of learning disabilities and the complexity in determining whether certain difficulties are the result of a learning disability or struggles with language acquisition. It then outlines the following methods of instruction that help support students with learning disabilities: (1) the Inclusive Classroom, (2) Universal Design for Learning (UDL), (3) Scaffolding, and (4) Peer-assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). The References and Additional Resources sections provide an extensive list of useful resources on learning disabilities.

DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES

Historically, there has been a degree of difficulty in defining learning disabilities, and a concrete shared definition has yet to be agreed upon; however, as a broad conceptual construct, learning disabilities can be understood as “unexpected underachievement,” where “the severity of underachievement . . . is unexpected because the individual has not responded adequately to instruction that is effective for most individuals” (Fletcher et al. 2019, 4). Under the broad umbrella of underachievement, Burr, Haas, and Ferriere (2015, 3) specifically define learning disability as “a neurological condition that interferes with an individual’s ability to store, process, or produce information. Learning disabilities can affect a student’s ability to read, write, speak, spell, compute math, or reason as well as a student’s attention, memory, coordination, social skills, and emotional maturity.” All learning disabilities are characterized by marked difficulty in at least one area of academic performance. Challenges with literacy skills make up the most common form of learning disability (Klingner and Eppolito 2014). Other factors that could manifest as scholastic underperformance should be eliminated. The Learning Disabilities Association of America (2020) states that “learning disabilities should not be confused with learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages.”

THE DIFFICULTY OF IDENTIFYING LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Identifying learning disabilities is a complex endeavor, but it becomes even more challenging in the English language classroom. A student’s struggles in English are sometimes misidentified as a learning disability when they are, in fact, the result of other causes (Abedi 2006; Artiles and Ortiz 2002; Artiles et al. 2005; McCardle et al. 2005; Shore and Sabatini 2009). Some English language learners have been misdiagnosed with a

learning disability when their scholastic underperformance is the result of not having had an adequate opportunity to develop language and literacy skills (Farnsworth 2018; Klingner and Eppolito 2014). Many factors outside of a learning disability, such as hunger, illness, and inadequate educational support at home, can interfere with a student’s ability to learn (Bulat et al. 2017).

Determining whether a student has a learning disability or a language-learning difficulty can be difficult because both challenges often present with similar characteristics (Case and Taylor 2005; Chu and Flores 2011; Hoover, Baca, and Klingner 2016; Klingner 2009; Klingner and Eppolito 2014). Some common shared behaviors in learning disabilities and second-language (L2) acquisition are (1) difficulty following directions, (2) poor auditory memory, (3) difficulty concentrating, (4) challenges in processing difficult language, and (5) a tendency to become quickly frustrated (Klingner and Eppolito 2014). Klingner and Eppolito (2014) have noted some differences in features of learning disabilities and L2 acquisition difficulties. For instance, a student with a learning disability might have difficulty with phonological awareness, while an L2 learner might have difficulty distinguishing between sounds not in the first language (L1). A student with a learning disability might have difficulty remembering sight words, while an L2 learner might struggle to remember sight words for words they do not understand. Researchers have recently been giving more attention to learning disabilities in the language classroom, but to date, not much is known about learning disabilities among L2 learners (Klingner, Artiles, and Méndez Barletta 2006; Shore and Sabatini 2009).

WHAT WE CAN DO IN THE ABSENCE OF A SUPPORT TEAM

One respondent in our research survey reported that they did not feel comfortable diagnosing a student with a learning disability for fear of misdiagnosis. We understand this hesitation and agree that it is important to be cautious in how we approach learning

disabilities. In most cases, in order to make an accurate diagnosis of a learning disorder, a multiple analysis should be carried out with a team of specialists (Farnsworth 2018; Lesaux and Harris 2013). However, in many contexts, a support team of specialists does not exist. There are some methods, though, that can be useful in determining the possible existence of a learning disorder, even in the absence of a team of specialists.

First of all, the instructor needs to honestly evaluate the progress of the entire class, carefully considering whether instruction is culturally, pedagogically, and linguistically appropriate in meeting the needs of all learners (Farnsworth 2018). If most students are struggling with a given task or subject area, then the problem is usually with the instruction and not the students. If, on the other hand, most students are doing well, and only a few students are having problems, the instructor needs to closely evaluate the struggling students and offer additional help as needed (Klingner 2009). Unusual difficulty or struggle in the L1 can also be a potential indicator of a learning disability (Farnsworth 2018; Klingner and Eppolito 2014).

Common indicators of a learning disability are (1) difficulty following directions, (2) difficulty concentrating, (3) challenges in understanding social situations, and (4) difficulty interpreting facial expression (Farnsworth 2018). See National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (2018) for information on signs and symptoms of learning disabilities.

WHAT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS CAN DO

Although English language teachers in many contexts might never become experts on learning disabilities, they can accommodate students with learning disabilities in their classes by implementing teaching approaches that are good for all students, with or without learning disabilities. In other words, the accommodation is in the planning and instruction for all learners, which allows teachers to help students with learning

disabilities. In the next section, we present four practical methods for helping students with learning disabilities. We start with the Inclusive Classroom and UDL; while the Inclusive Classroom offers specific strategies, UDL is an overall framework for instruction. This is followed by scaffolding and the PALS technique for reading.

THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

As Dolmage (2008, 17) has pointed out, “There is no perfect body or mind. And there is no normal body or mind.” An inclusive classroom is one that is designed to meet the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities or other learning challenges (Bulat et al. 2017).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005) outlines inclusive education as including the following principles:

- Inclusion is a process.
- Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.
- Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students.
- Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. (UNESCO 2005, 15–16)

Research has shown that the best way to instruct students with mild or high-incidence disabilities is to place them in regular classrooms rather than in segregated schools or special classes for students with disabilities (Bulat et al. 2017; Cole, Waldron, and Majd 2004; Rapp and Arndt 2012). Students with disabilities learn better and develop better social skills in inclusive classrooms than in segregated classrooms; including students with disabilities in regular classrooms also has a positive effect on students without disabilities (Ferguson, Desjarlais, and Meyer 2000). In an inclusive classroom, students

with varied abilities learn to interact with one another, an important part of learning to be inclusive. Because the Inclusive Classroom includes all learners, no specialized disability testing or identification beyond what teachers might normally do is required (Bulat et al. 2017), although some students with severe disabilities might need more specialized and individualized care than can be carried out in a mainstream class (Rapp and Arndt 2012).

Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom

1. Use guided note-taking

Many students benefit from taking notes, a practice that helps learners remember key concepts; having notes to refer to later reinforces retention. Guided note-taking helps learners focus on certain ideas or key points in a listening passage, reading passage, or instructor's lecture, which results in better comprehension for students with or without disabilities (Chi and Wylie 2014; Schwartz and Gurung 2012). To conduct a guided note-taking activity, give your students specific points or a set of questions to answer as they listen or read, as in Table 1.

2. Make students aware of the daily schedule

Many students, including those with intellectual disabilities, perform better if they are made aware of the daily schedule for a class period or the entire school day (Bulat et al. 2017). You can make students aware of the

daily schedule by writing it on the board or a flip chart posted at a visible place in the room. Marking off tasks as they are completed gives students a sense of accomplishment.

3. Attend to student fatigue

Allow students enough time to master the material. Students with learning disabilities might need more time than other students to complete some tasks. Provide plenty of breaks throughout the day or class period and vary task types in a lesson and across the curriculum. Incorporate activities with movement into your lessons. (See McCaughey [2018] for ways to incorporate movement into your lessons.)

4. Provide systematic instruction

For each lesson, start by providing the objective(s) of the lesson, a brief overview of the lesson, and the tasks or exercises students will be expected to engage in or complete. If the lesson is about learning to write a formal email, for example, the teacher would start by stating that as the objective. The teacher then explains that the lesson will focus on understanding when a formal email is needed and the different components of a formal email. Next, the teacher lets students know that the lesson will end with each student writing a formal email.

5. Provide explicit instruction

Many students need explicit instruction to understand new concepts. A teacher should

Example A: Specific Points	
Advantages of living in the city	Disadvantages of living in the city
Example B: Questions and Answers	
Questions	Answers
1. What is media literacy?	
2. Why is media literacy important?	
3. How can media literacy skills be developed?	

Table 1. Example of guided note-taking activities

not assume that a new concept will be learned unless it is explicitly and directly taught. For instance, a teacher cannot assume that students will automatically acquire a new grammar point just by listening to or reading a passage with the new grammar point. Input through a reading or listening passage is a good way to introduce a new grammar point, but the teacher should then move to explicit instruction.

6. Institute activity-based learning

Most students do not learn well when they are exposed only to teacher talk; they need to actively engage in applying new concepts. This application of learning can take place in many ways. For instance, it might be carried out through a speaking task, a writing task, or a presentation on a relevant topic. For example, after listening to a passage about daily routines, students could write down their own daily routines and then explain their routine to a partner, who fills in a chart while listening.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

The concept of UDL in education is based on the architectural concept of Universal Design, in which spaces are built to be as accessible as possible by everyone, regardless of disability, age, or any other factors. The purpose of UDL is to address the variability of all learners—with or without any kind of disability—and meet their needs (Rapp 2014). Students vary in what they perceive and how they learn, and in their interests and motivations. A curriculum designed for the average student typically excludes more students than it includes. UDL follows a set of principles to use when designing curriculum so that all learners have an equal opportunity to learn. UDL does not have a specified template or rigid rules to follow; rather, it utilizes varied and flexible strategies in order to meet the needs of all learners (Dolmage 2015).

In the original framework of UDL, the three principles are to provide the following:

1. multiple means of engagement
2. multiple means of representation

3. multiple means of action and expression (Rose and Meyer 2002).

1. Provide multiple means of engagement

This principle indicates that learners are engaged differently by different tasks and learning situations (Rapp 2014). There is no one optimal learning task that will equally engage all learners. For instance, some learners like group work and collaboration, while others prefer to work alone. Some learners might enjoy projects with loose guidelines and a lot of freedom, while others prefer assignments with structured guidelines. To address the diversity among learners and to engage and motivate them, aim to utilize different methods of engagement throughout your course.

Providing multiple means of engagement includes planning lessons with a variety of interactional patterns such as pair work, group work, whole-class work, and individual work as well as classroom tasks that offer different activities, such as interactive sessions and individual study time. To physically engage learners with one another, have them arrange their desks in a half circle so they can see one another. You cannot expect that all learners will be equally engaged in every task, but by having a variety of engagement techniques, you are more likely to meet the needs of all learners.

2. Provide multiple means of representation

Learners differ in how they perceive and comprehend information. Rapp and Arndt (2012) refer to methods and materials through which students perceive information as input. When input is presented in only one way, the method of presentation favors learners with the ability to access the material through the presented method and marginalizes others. For instance, information that is delivered only by speech favors auditory learners. There is a much greater chance of reaching all learners when input is provided in multiple forms.

In a language class, for instance, instead of only reading a dialogue in the target language, learners might also listen to the dialogue and present it in the form of a role play. They might also see pictures of new vocabulary contained in the dialogue and write new words in a vocabulary notebook, perhaps adding definitions or simple drawings. In addition, presenting new information in multiple forms increases the chances that the information will be remembered, as it allows learners the chance to access the same information on multiple occasions. There is no one optimal way of presenting new information to all learners, so it should be represented through multiple means (Rapp 2014).

3. Provide multiple means of action and expression

Learners approach tasks differently and express what they know in different ways. For instance, some learners might be better at written expression than speech, and vice versa. The most common methods of output in classrooms typically comprise written production (for example, tests, worksheets, and writing assignments) or in-class responses to teacher-led questions (Rapp 2014). While these methods of output are suitable for some learners, they do not sufficiently account for the learning of all students; some learners may not be able to successfully demonstrate their learning through traditional methods of output. Providing students with multiple choices for output can greatly improve learning (Rapp 2014).

For instance, instructors can allow students to choose among several assignments. Instead of requiring all students to write a research report on a certain topic, for example, instructors can allow students to choose among various tasks, such as writing a research report, creating a podcast, and compiling a photo essay. Another method is to allow students to choose among a set of assignments. For example, when designing your course, you can give students a number of assignments to choose from. Students are then required to complete a certain number of those assignments, four out

of five, for instance, so that learners have some choice in their methods of output.

4. Provide multiple means of assessment

To add to the three principles of the original UDL framework, Rapp and Arndt (2012) suggest a fourth principle: Provide multiple means of assessment. In keeping with the three primary principles of UDL, evaluation of student learning should also be carried out using a variety of assessment methods, using formative and summative assessments and alternative assessments (Rapp 2014). Summative assessment is assessment of learning. It is used to evaluate a student's learning at the end of a unit, course, or program. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is assessment for learning. Formative assessment helps learners know how they can improve and does not result in a grade. Courses should be designed so that students receive feedback and formative assessment regularly throughout the semester. Lengthy or multi-component assignments should be divided into sizeable chunks that provide formative assessment at regular intervals. Alternative assessments, such as portfolios or project work, show student achievement over time and on a variety of tasks.

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which a teacher, assistant, or more capable peer temporarily assists learners to complete a certain task successfully so that they will later be able to complete the task alone. However, scaffolding does not simply mean helping; scaffolding techniques should be designed so that learners can develop full competence in a task that they can later carry out independently (Gibbons 2015). In scaffolded instruction, the teacher guides the learner through a step-by-step process from the start to the completion of a task.

In a scaffolded lesson on writing a paragraph, for example, the instructor begins by helping learners brainstorm ideas for a topic. Following the brainstorming session, students draft

a paragraph. Afterwards, students receive some kind of feedback on their draft. Then students revise and later edit their paragraphs. In a non-scaffolded lesson, on the contrary, the teacher might just tell students to write a paragraph. The teacher might be able to give a non-scaffolded paragraph assignment after having gone through the scaffolded version a certain number of times; in other words, through completing the task several times, students would move from novice to competent achiever. Scaffolding has appeared to be a successful technique with English language learners with learning disabilities and is useful in a class of English language learners with and without learning disabilities (Santamaria, Fletcher, and Bos 2002).

PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGIES (PALS)

PALS is a class-wide peer-tutoring reading program in which a higher-performing student is paired with a lower-performing student to carry out reading activities. Research has shown that PALS has improved the reading ability of students of all performance levels, from low to high, including students with learning disabilities (Fuchs, Fuchs, et al. 1997; Fuchs, Fuchs, Thompson, et al. 2001; Sáenz, Fuchs, and Fuchs 2005; Simmons et al. 1995). Colón's (2016) research shows that English language learners with and without disabilities were able to improve their oral reading fluency and accuracy over the control group following a number of PALS sessions. It is often best to pair students in a clandestine manner so that no student feels singled out. You can have students change partners periodically throughout the semester or course, every four or five weeks. Teachers should choose appropriate reading materials for students, depending on their reading level. Readings from the textbook or other course materials can be used for PALS activities.

During PALS activities, students take turns with the roles of Coach and Reader. The higher-performing student should take the role of Reader first so that the less-proficient reader has a chance to preview the text and to hear it read aloud once before reading it. After

five minutes of reading, students reverse roles, and the new Reader rereads the same passage while the new Coach provides feedback. The three core activities of PALS are partner reading, paragraph shrinking, and prediction relay, as follows:

1. Partner reading

As the Reader reads aloud, the Coach provides corrective feedback, helping with words that the Reader needs support with.

2. Paragraph shrinking

The Reader gives the main idea, provides a short summary of the reading passage (one or two sentences), and gives a recap of the most important details in the passage.

3. Prediction relay

Before reading, the Reader makes predictions about what is likely to happen in the next part of the reading passage (this can be a page, a paragraph, or a section of text). After reading the given block of text, the Reader gives a short summary of the just-read text. The Coach determines whether the predictions that had been made before reading were accurate.

CONCLUSION

This article is meant, first and foremost, to bring attention to learners with learning disabilities in the English language classroom. At some point, all English language teachers have worked with or will work with learners with learning disabilities. While we as English language teachers may not become experts on learning disabilities, we can have a better understanding of them. Second, the article provides practical suggestions for accommodating English language learners with and without disabilities in the same classroom. This article is a point from which teachers can start their work. The References and Additional Resources sections provide a number of useful resources for understanding and accommodating learning disabilities; many specifically focus on L2 learners.

We stated at the beginning of the article that, as English language teachers, we should all be committed to finding ways to help learners in our own classrooms who might have learning disabilities. As our research has shown, most English language instructors have had limited or no training at all in accommodating students with learning disabilities (Sowell and Sugisaki 2020). It is our hope that through our research and writing, more English language instructors will be able to improve their understanding of learning disabilities in the English language classroom and find ways to accommodate students' needs so that they can succeed academically.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For understanding and identifying learning disabilities, and developing and implementing effective techniques and environments for L2 acquisition, we recommend readers consult several resources cited in the text—Burr, Haas, and Ferriere (2015); Fletcher et al. (2019); Hoover, Baca, and Klingner (2016); Klingner and Eppolito (2014); Learning Disabilities Association of America (2020); Rapp (2014); and Rapp and Arndt (2012)—as well as the additional resources listed below.

Books

- Doran, P. R., and A. K. Noggle, eds. 2019. *Supporting English learners with exceptional needs*. Annapolis Junction, MD: TESOL Press. (An edited collection on supporting language learners with exceptional needs)
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Online Resources

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Jimalee Sowell is a PhD candidate in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has served as an English Language Fellow and an English Language Specialist. Her research interests include disability studies, teaching writing, peace education, genre analysis, large class pedagogy, and teacher education.

Larry Sugisaki is a PhD student in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He has worked as a university English professor as well as an English language teacher in Japan. His research interests include disability studies, translanguaging, and writing-center studies.

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Reading Eyes Wide Shut: Visualization, Language Learners, and Texts

The man who followed slipped on a smooth rock and nearly fell. He recovered his footing with a great effort, at the same time uttering a sharp cry of pain. He seemed faint and stretched one hand forward, seeking support against the air. When he had steadied himself, he stepped forward. But he slipped again and nearly fell. Then he stood still and looked at the other man, who had never turned his head.

The man stood still for fully a minute, as if he were deciding something. Then he called:

“I say, Bill, I hurt my foot.”

Bill struggled ahead through the milky water. He did not look around. The man watched him go, and although his face lacked expression, as before, his eyes had the look of a wounded animal.

—Jack London, “Love of Life”

In 1907, Jack London published a series of short stories that would eventually work their way into the canon of U.S. literature. Of these, “Love of Life” narrates the plight of two Klondike gold prospectors lost in the Canadian Yukon and their struggle to survive. The excerpt above (London 2005; original version published in 1907) opens with one of the two men slipping on a rock and injuring his foot. Bill, his companion, leaves him to fend for himself. The days and nights and weeks pass, and the unnamed man struggles to live. The story ends with a group of sailing scientists discovering the man dragging himself across the shore of a deserted river beach. Aboard ship, the man slowly recovers—regaining his weight and speech. In the meantime, the team of scientists learns that he has lined his bed with the stale bread hoarded from his sympathetic shipmates as he prepares for another possible famine.

For secondary-level teachers working with adolescent language learners who are generally familiar with the basic process of reading, the question remains as to how to reframe reading in ways that promote active engagement both for enjoyment and for learning. For many of us who work in secondary classrooms, one of our motivations for choosing English teaching as a profession is a shared love of reading short stories such

as London’s. At its best, entering a narrative is a sensory experience: engaged readers see, hear, and feel the words of a story and imagine themselves within its pages. Often, however, in literature-based secondary-level English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, reading doesn’t feel engaging or interesting. Too many adolescent language learners do not readily identify as proficient readers. We also recognize that in high schools, reading

as a sensory experience is a distant childhood memory, clouded by an emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing and the multiple demands of the secondary curriculum.

To that end, our intent in this article is to illustrate how secondary-level teachers might reframe reading a classic American short story as a sensory experience, leveraging visualization strategies that tap into student creativity.

We begin with a brief overview of the literature surrounding visualization and reading comprehension. Using the London short story as an anchor text, we continue with a series of five concrete but flexible strategies: Reading Graffiti, Image-Scaping, Guided Imagery, Storyboarding in Person, and Logographic Cues. Although our emphasis is on the adolescent classroom, we encourage teachers and readers across grade levels and content areas to try out these moves and adapt them to their own classrooms and circumstances. Our argument is that visualization strategies can make reading in high schools as exciting as we remember it when we were young children before bedtime with our parents or when we sat in a circle on the floor of our kindergarten classrooms.

VISUALIZATION, ADOLESCENT LANGUAGE LEARNERS, AND TEXTS

We preface the classroom strategies with a review of the literature surrounding the intersection of visualization and literacy. Beers (2003) notes that comprehension is both a product and a process, something that requires purposeful and strategic effort on the reader's part. In this process, readers must anticipate the direction of the text, see the action, correct any misunderstandings, and connect what is in the text to what is in their mind in order to make an educated guess about what is happening in the text. These dynamic and recursive reading procedures play an important role in comprehension because readers use them to construct coherent mental representations and explanations about what they have read (Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso 1994).

That said, even if an array of reading strategies can support comprehension, only a limited number of strategies, such as questioning, predicting, summarizing, and clarifying, are routinely emphasized in English language teaching (ELT) classrooms (De Koning and Van der Schoot 2013). Moreover, we have found strategies for “seeing reading” relatively untapped in secondary ELT contexts. This is problematic because reading is not only a linguistic experience but also a sensory experience. When readers use their senses and visualize, texts come alive and make sense. That is, beyond their motivational value, visualization strategies are highly effective tools for deepening reading comprehension.

We want our students to be able to enter the world of a narrative—especially classic ones such as London's. When readers begin to see what they read, they create mental images and envision settings and situations within a text; they become the book (Wilhelm 2016). Further, researchers note that an important factor in differentiating proficient readers from less proficient readers is their ability to visualize text content themselves (De Koning and Van der Schoot 2013). When meaning breaks down, proficient readers consciously create images in their head to help make sense of the words on the page (Tovani 2000). Thus, readers who do not create mental images—or do not know how to create mental images when reading—often experience comprehension problems and, by consequence, disengagement (Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson 2003; De Koning and Van der Schoot 2013).

On the one hand, when mental visuals do not come easily to a reader, this can signal that the reader's comprehension of the text is limited. This disruption may be due to text complexity, difficult vocabulary, or limited background knowledge. On the other hand, comprehension is enhanced when students are prompted or taught to use mental imagery (Beers 2003). Modeled visualization strategies are critical for “reluctant and low-ability readers and . . . can help them become more proficient creators of internal visual imagery that supports comprehension” (Hibbing and

Rankin-Erickson 2003, 759). Consequently, when students learn to create mental images as they read, they experience improved recall and an enhanced ability to draw inferences and make predictions (Gambrell and Bales 1986).

Related studies suggest that mental images “can make reading a text more enjoyable, result in positive attitudes toward reading . . . and can influence the time readers are willing to spend on a text” (Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson 2003, 762). Furthermore, visualizing text content provides readers with information about people, places, and things not associated with their individual experiences, expanding their outlook on the world. In short, we argue that visualizing a text leads to learning in a way that cultivates a heightened awareness of how readers see the world. It is important, therefore, that teachers see students’ ability to visualize as an essential skill in the reading-comprehension process, making it a pedagogical priority.

EYES WIDE SHUT: FIVE STRATEGIES FOR SEEING READING

We have used “Love of Life” as an anchor text here, as a number of London’s classic stories are available for free download through American English resources in PDF and audio (see U.S. Department of State 2020).

As we explained at the start of this article, “Love of Life” opens with the image of two gold prospectors, Bill and an unnamed protagonist, making their way slowly down a rocky bank into an icy stream somewhere in the Yukon Territory. The unnamed protagonist slips and injures his ankle. Bill trudges on, carrying a heavy sack of gold—deserting his injured companion to the elements. As the story unfolds, we watch the protagonist battle famine, fear, and the wild. He finally catches up to Bill—and finds the sack of gold alongside Bill’s skeletal remains. A team of scientists traveling on a fishing ship ultimately rescues the lost and injured man. Approximately a month after the story began, the unnamed man returns to San Francisco via the fishing vessel—traumatized by the

experience he has endured. We understand that it was his “love of life”—his will to live—that saved him.

Stories such as “Love of Life” lend themselves to visualization. Ideally, they are stories that we read both aloud and silently and that we watch in our mind’s eye. They can also include information texts across content areas of study. As we have explained in the literature review, visualization increases both reading comprehension and reading pleasure. A story becomes a movie in Technicolor. But visualization doesn’t always come easily for readers—especially for those reading in a foreign or second language. Thus, we offer the following visualization strategies—and we have purposely selected strategies that might be used in classroom environments with limited resources.

As a disclaimer, we recognize that none of these strategies is uniquely ours. Rather, these and their variants might be readily found online and in primary-level literacy methods textbooks with a complex genealogy of origin and passed on from teacher to teacher in ways that make it challenging to pinpoint their distinct sources. Our hope is that teachers reading this article will take them up with their students and broadly adapt them and share them as they engage in classroom and extracurricular reading.

We encourage teachers to select and apply these strategies based on the needs of their students and the topics or texts they are presenting in their classes. The sequence of strategies might follow the order that we have provided here—or teachers and readers might collectively select a strategy randomly or the strategy that resonates most with the text at hand or with the resources available to the participants.

Strategy 1: Reading Graffiti

Reading Graffiti is based on the concept of a “gallery walk,” which comes from the world of museums. For example, in Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History recently revamped its dinosaur exhibit with a new display of an exceptional *Tyrannosaurus rex*, among other things.

Visiting the museum with friends or family is exciting, and stopping to inspect the fossils often inspires visceral reactions such as, “Wow!” or more exploratory talk: “I wonder how the *Tyrannosaurus rex* died?” In other words, the visit often incites responses. In the same way, Reading Graffiti is a practice that involves participants moving physically from textual segment to textual segment, responding with a pen or pencil or marker.

Taking up “Love of Life” in a Reading Graffiti format, you can begin by identifying textual segments that lend themselves to quick illustration or sketching. Place bits and pieces of the narrative onto large sheets of paper taped around the classroom’s four walls. In one particularly visually dynamic moment, the exhausted prospector hallucinates a bear for a horse:

Once, as his mind was wandering, he was returned to reality by a sight that almost caused him to faint. Before him stood a horse. A horse! He could not believe his eyes. A thick cloud was in his eyes, flashing with points of light. He rubbed his eyes fiercely to clear his sight. Then he saw before him not a horse, but a great brown bear. The animal was studying him with curiosity. (London 2005)

With the passage as a starting point, a textual image might read, “Before him stood a horse. A horse! He could not believe his eyes.” Another image might read, “Then he saw before him not a horse, but a great brown bear.” A third might read, “The animal was studying him with curiosity.”

Then, direct groups of students to each poster or large sheet of paper where you have already written these sentences and invite students to envision on the paper what the text invokes for them visually. Instead of having a single representative for each group sketch or illustrate the textual segment, ask all the participants to respond “graffiti style,” making quick sketches or even stick figures. Encourage participants to build off what individual students and previous groups have already started, with each group having

a few minutes to respond to each of the textual images before moving on to the next. Afterwards, debrief the class on the sketched, visual responses and encourage individual or collaborative elaboration of ideas. Ask learners to explain their sketches in response to the text. Questions to ask include “What might be missing?” and “What might we take away?” The point of Reading Graffiti is, thus, to have students illustrate, however briefly, what the text invokes in the mind of the reader, both concretely and abstractly.

Strategy 2: Image-Scaping

What we like to call Image-Scaping asks students to pause while reading to sketch quickly the images that the text generates. It is related to Sound-Scaping, a way of collaboratively building the setting for a narrative aurally to activate prior knowledge and imagination (Murray, Salas, and Ni Thoghdha 2015). In the case of the “Love of Life” excerpt, a Sound-Scaping activity would ask readers to brainstorm a list of words to describe an Alaskan winter forest. What are the sounds of this forest? What are the primary sounds? The subtle sounds? Are there voices? Students suggest options and try them out—slowly building a one-minute soundscape using the class as the sound chorus, pausing for feedback and revision from the whole group, then circling back to incorporate ideas.

Image-Scaping asks readers to do the same thing—but visually. Taking up the same “Love of Life” excerpt, the reader would pause strategically during the narrative, allowing individual participants or pairs or small groups of participants to create a two-minute illustration of the page, a passage, or even a phrase. A variation of the activity might transfer the sketch from a single individual page of blank paper to the blackboard or whiteboard. After segments of the text are read aloud, invite students to come to the board one at a time to sketch what each segment has provoked in their minds. What does it make them see? Limit each individual artist/reader’s time on the blackboard group sketch to less than a minute. Once that minute is over, invite another student to do the same.

The result is a collaborative, layered group illustration or representation of the passage. Gather students in a circle near the group sketch and ask them to talk about it together. Have them describe what they included and how it relates to the text. Have them describe what others included and how it relates to or extends their own choices. You might ask, “How do the images help us visualize the text? What is missing? What is superfluous? What have we chosen to emphasize?” Help students understand that Reading Graffiti and Image-Scaping are less about creating a polished illustration, something that is often beyond the capacities of teachers and students. Rather, these activities and the ones in the next sections emphasize the power of visualization before, during, and after reading for increasing and consolidating reading comprehension.

Strategy 3: Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery is also a powerful tool for helping readers construct mental images while reading—an important component of text comprehension, especially for students who struggle with a text, or who are still building familiarity with the English language. Guided Imagery encourages students to activate background knowledge, build an experience base for further inquiry, and explore and extend conceptual understanding (Deshler et al. 2001).

To implement the strategy, the teacher begins by prompting the students to imagine themselves in the setting of the text, in the role of a character, or in a historical period that is the subject of a unit of study—in the case of “Love of Life,” the nineteenth-century Klondike Gold Rush. Once they have had time to formulate their own visual images, students are encouraged to share those images with a partner or in a small group. Depending on the students’ familiarity with the topic, the teacher may offer descriptive details of the subject matter in order to facilitate the visualization process.

For example, before taking up London’s short stories, a teacher could ask students to imagine life as it might have been at the end of the nineteenth century across the United States and why men and women might have been taken in

by the thought of prospecting for gold. Here the teacher might provide descriptive information about the boomtowns that emerged during the Gold Rush and the hardship the prospectors faced both in town and in the wild—supplementing the discussion with historical images and documents surrounding the Gold Rush of 1887. Then, the teacher might ask students to image the decision-making processes of gold prospectors as they abandoned their lives and families with the hope of striking it rich in the Klondike. Finally, the teacher might ask students to imagine those decisions and to share images with peers in a small-group format. The Guided Imagery strategy helps to foster students’ interest and engagement in the upcoming unit study.

The process of creating visual images in one’s mind strengthens inferential thinking and supports conceptual connections. The mental images enable readers to better understand concepts and actions described in the text, identify with characters, and connect the concepts in the reading to their own experiences and background knowledge (Harvey and Goudvis 2017). Guided Imagery can be used before, during, or after reading, and it can be applied to both English literature and content-area material. A science teacher, for example, working in tandem around “Love of Life,” might ask students to imagine the perspective of a grizzly bear. What sort of habitats does the bear need to thrive? How have man-made events such as the Gold Rush and contemporary oil drilling, mining, and climatic change threatened bears’ existence?

Strategy 4: Storyboarding in Person

To support comprehension, we have also leveraged something we like to think of as Storyboarding in Person—a collaborative, kinesthetic visualization practice that draws from applied theater. Here the teacher challenges readers to use their own bodies to create a series of frozen images of textual moments or key concepts. To order a sequence for filming, film directors commonly use storyboarding.

To begin, have students identify a short passage to divide into frames. The opening scene of “Love of Life,” for example, might be

divided into three distinct visual moments: the image of the two men making their way carefully down the slippery rocks, the image of the unnamed man slipping and injuring his foot, and the image of Bill abandoning the injured prospector. Or, in the scene where the injured and famished prospector mistakes a bear for a horse, the frames might include the man hallucinating on the forest floor before a rearing horse, the same man rubbing his eyes in disbelief, and the man being studied curiously by a brown bear.

Once students have identified a series of frames from these or other narrative moments within the larger text, divide the class into small groups and ask them to create a frozen image of the scene. Tell them to use nothing but their bodies. Encourage them to double and triple up—with two or three readers taking on the form of the man either separately or combining themselves into one individual. Likewise, one classmate might take on the image of the horse—or three or four might collaborate to create one great horse, and so on. Have each group present its frame to the class in sequence and discuss. What might also be included in the frames? A forest? A boulder? Other animals? Students might initially create frozen scenes and then slowly add repetitive movements or sounds. Let the frames and the readers' collective creativity guide the improvisation.

Strategy 5: Logographic Cues

Visualization and reading can also take on smaller and more-private formats in the form of Logographic Cues. A logograph is a visual symbol used to support readers as they navigate a given text (Beers 2003). Specifically, “logographic cues are designed to offer readers a high-utility message in a minimum amount of space” (Beers 2003, 129). In practice, readers insert visual symbols into the text to support their understanding of a story’s progression. These symbols act as “signposts” to indicate characters, conflict, or setting as well as to show questions, clarifications, or inferences (Beers 2003). While it is okay for teachers to establish a bank of symbols for students, it is best that students design their own for better understanding.

Teachers should use a short excerpt to demonstrate the application of logographic cues using the think-aloud method. Let’s examine an excerpt from “Love of Life” and apply this visualization strategy.

The ship was no more than four miles away. He could see it quite well when he rubbed his eyes. He could also see the white sail of a small boat cutting the water of the shining sea. But he could never drag himself those four miles. He knew that, and was very calm about the fact. He knew that he could not travel another half mile. And yet he wanted to live. It was unreasonable that he should die after all he had been through. Fate asked too much of him. And, dying, he could not accept death. It was madness, perhaps, but in the very grasp of death he refused to die. (London 2005)

The first sentence reads, “The ship was no more than four miles away.” After reading the first sentence, we know there is a ship in sight that could potentially save the protagonist. Next to that sentence, in the margin, we draw two logographic cues in the form of a ship and a cross. The ship represents the object in sight, and the cross signifies safety. The ship is the protagonist’s only chance for safety at this point of the story. As we continue to read, the lines, “But he could never drag himself those four miles. . . . He knew that he could not travel another half mile” stand out. These sentences indicate the protagonist’s energy level. We might draw a logograph of a gas gauge reading “empty.” This signpost helps us to keep track of the protagonist’s physical state as he makes a push toward safety. The last sentences read, “And yet he wanted to live. . . . he could not accept death. It was madness, perhaps, but in the very grasp of death he refused to die.” These sentences are an “Aha” moment for us. There is a connection between these lines and the title of the story. It is because of his “love of life” that the protagonist is persevering through the challenges of the wilderness. We can draw a small chain in the margin to signify a “link” between this section of the story and the title.

In sum, the logographs that we have created for this paragraph tell us a story. There is a *ship* (ship logograph) not too far away that could bring the protagonist to *safety* (cross logograph). However, he has very *little energy* (gas gauge logograph) to make it to be potentially rescued. But, because of the protagonist's *love of life* (chain logograph), he will not give up. These logographs have served as high-utility messages, supporting our visualization, internalization, and comprehension of the content.

While logographic cues support comprehension, they simultaneously work to enhance students' ability to visualize the content of a given text. The various logographs created during reading allow students to visualize the progression of the story. Specifically, students are seeing the story as it happens through their personalized lens, which is represented by their logographs. In a sense, the reader acts as the director of the story, controlling the story's artistic and dramatic visual aspects as the words on the page are read.

In terms of procedures, teachers should provide students with multiple opportunities to practice the Logographic Cues strategy before having them implement it independently. To begin, teachers might demonstrate the strategy in a think-aloud, whereby they talk aloud to the class as they read with a specific logograph or series of cues describing their thought processes as they employ the cues and the logograph. Second, the teacher can invite students to implement the previously modeled logographic cue(s) with a partner on a small portion of the text. This will give the teacher an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings and answer questions as they arise. Third, ask students to practice the strategy independently on another portion of the text. The final step requires students to present their logographs to the whole class and discuss how this process enhanced their ability to visualize the text. This debriefing capitalizes on the gradual-release method so that students are comfortable and effective in implementing the Logographic Cues strategy.

DISCUSSION: READING EYES WIDE SHUT

In this article, we have presented a series of visualization strategies for secondary teachers reading through a narrative with adolescent language learners. Using London's "Love of Life" as an anchor text, we have described how teachers might engage readers in quick, collaborative, multi-layered graffiti-inspired sketches of what they imagine the text to look like and how readers might create an image-scape of the narrative or the narrative to come. We have described how teachers might leverage guided imagery to familiarize students with the descriptive historical context of a story about a nineteenth-century gold prospector—the environment he would have encountered and how that environment has changed since then. We have explained how a narrative passage might be divided into frames and storyboarded physically by readers. We have described how readers might create smaller visual cues in the form of logographs to guide their progression through a text. In their totality, these and other visualization strategies are aimed at making a text come alive for readers so that they might begin imagining the narrative they are reading—and themselves in that narrative space.

We have purposefully limited these selected strategies to those we think might be viable in classrooms with few resources. However, as a parting note, we encourage teachers to explore the many new technologies they might also use for visualizing texts, and we encourage teachers and students to explore them together. We also include the disclaimer that while we have focused here on the secondary classroom and on a short work of fiction, the strategies we have described can be adapted to a range of classroom contexts and texts. Certainly, not every scene in a typical story or passage of a nonfiction text is easily visualized using these strategies—or at least in our collective mind's eye. We encourage teachers to carefully select texts that lend themselves to visualization as they initially introduce students to ways of seeing before, during, and after reading.

Additionally, we know that some students will gravitate to certain strategies more than

others. Trying out more than one strategy with the same passage or even creating classroom stations where readers might self-select a strategy that resonates with them might be a way of affording choice. Whatever the format, talk to students about the strategies, which worked better for them, and why that may be. As students become more comfortable with the strategies, have them try the strategies with more-challenging texts—ones that initially they struggled to visualize. Talk about the challenges with the students; talk about other strategies individuals use to see what they read. Share success, failure, uncertainty, and innovation.

More than pleasure, reading has become a critical data point for measuring students' learning achievement and the value assigned to teachers and the work they do and the schools to which they belong. In the context of K–12 U.S. public education, for example, the work of English language arts classrooms has shifted to performance-based standards of students' ability to read a broad range of texts (literary and information) proficiently and independently. Visualization, we argue, can move students beyond simple comprehension to a space of meaning-making between text, self, and world. Ideally, as readers, we open a book or read a short story to enter the narrative fully. When this happens—thanks to the author's craft and our own reading processes—we keep reading and read more. Page by page—with every image the text evokes or that we create, eyes wide shut—our lust for life and for reading becomes that much more intense.

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Spencer Salas is a professor of TESOL at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Brian Keith Williams is an assistant professor of Education in the Department of Educator Preparation at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

Maryann Mraz is a professor of Literacy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Soufiane Adrane is the Regional English Language Office Specialist covering Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Soufiane joined the U.S. Mission to Morocco in 2018 as Education Outreach and English Language Coordinator.

Using Movie Dubbing to Improve Natural English Pronunciation Skills

Many people who acquire a second language have an accent, which is a normal development. Although accents in general are not problematic, in some cases the sounds of English may be mispronounced to such a degree that the output is not comprehensible to the listener. When the message is not comprehensible, communication is hampered. That is why pronunciation is one of the important “building blocks of the language” (Morley 1991, 484) and necessary for comprehensible communication. Despite its importance, pronunciation is often deemphasized in the classroom. In my university, most first-year students have poor English pronunciation skills because at the K–12 levels, their tests focus on grammar competence.

Although my university offers a course on English pronunciation, the effectiveness is questionable due to limited time and students’ ability. In my class, I can focus only on traditional techniques such as minimal-pair drills and reading out loud, and my students practice isolated sounds slowly with a monotone voice. These traditional techniques are common practice in many classrooms of all levels. In real life, however, native speakers utter speech faster and with various intonation patterns.

This article describes a project to overcome such limitations by requiring learners to dub a short movie excerpt in English. It uses the most successful techniques from previous studies (Chiu 2012; He and Wasuntarasophit 2015; Florente 2016; Talaván and Costal 2017). When dubbing a movie excerpt, learners realize gaps in their pronunciation skills by comparing their speech with the actor’s speech. They then practice reading the script multiple times, imitating the actor’s

voice while maintaining the original speed. This repeated practice over time is beneficial for improving speaking speed and intonation.

MOVIE-DUBBING TASKS IN SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

Movie dubbing is one of the most well-studied foreign-language-learning techniques among the various audiovisual translation modes (Lertola 2019). It requires learners to replace the original spoken soundtrack of a movie excerpt—typically with a maximum length of three minutes—with their own voice. To complete this task, learners listen to the voices of the actors. They then mute the video and record their voice directly onto it while maintaining the speed and imitating the actors’ voices.

While there are many movies that teachers and students can choose from, my project requires students to choose characters and work with a script in pairs to dub a two-minute excerpt

Final 8 Weeks	Activities
1	Instructor introduces the project to students: guidelines, technology tools, the script, and requirements.
2	Students work on the project.
3	Students work on the project.
4	Project Q&A session: Students, in pairs, report briefly (about five minutes) to the instructor on their progress and ask any questions that they have.
5	Students work on the project.
6	Final project Q&A session: Optional chance for student pairs to meet with the instructor
7	Students work on the project.
8	Students submit the project report and their movie-dubbing product online.

Table 1. A sample eight-week project timeline

from *The Lion King* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBvuqc9WALo>). Most of my students have beginning to lower-intermediate English skills; however, teachers can adapt this procedure according to their students' level and time considerations.

Project timeline

In my class, the movie-dubbing project takes place during the final eight weeks of the English pronunciation course (see Table 1 for a sample project timeline). Before the project, students have learned to produce a number of challenging sounds, mostly in isolation.

In the first week, I explain the project requirements, technology tools, and the script. During the remaining seven weeks, students practice reading the script inside and outside the classroom. This process can be flexible, depending on each student pair's progress. To begin, students typically work individually to learn the part of their own movie character. Then, partners practice together. In the eighth week, students submit their final project with their voices dubbed for both characters.

There are two activities I find especially useful in the procedure:

1. In the first week, I let students listen to the original movie excerpt while they read the script, and I briefly elicit their thoughts on relevant features of the

language (intonation, vocabulary, etc.). Indeed, for students to have a foundation for effective dubbing skills, it is essential that they understand the context, the personality of each character, and the reasons why a character speaks using a certain tone.

2. For this kind of project, it is helpful to provide students with personalized support because the progress of each pair varies. I therefore organize two question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, in weeks 4 and 6. In these sessions, instead of actively working on the dubbing project, each pair reports on its progress and has a chance to ask me questions and discuss the project. This is the time I can help students troubleshoot their problems (e.g., a part with challenging intonation). Moreover, it ensures that students do not wait until the last minute to complete the task. With feedback from the teacher, they can continue to work on the project with more confidence in the later weeks.

Teachers are especially encouraged to incorporate these two activities if they use movie dubbing for long-term project-based learning.

Alternative options: Teachers can use several short scenes, less than 30 seconds long, throughout the semester (e.g., every two or three weeks) instead of one longer scene.

PROJECT REPORT

This project report helps you understand each character's personality and the vocabulary in the script. Each question is worth 1 point, with a total of 10 points possible. Please answer all the questions below in English. You can answer the questions in two or three sentences each (*longer responses are optional*).

A. Understanding characters

1. Write at least three adjectives in the table to describe the personality of [Character A] and [Character B].

Character A	
Character B	

2. Does [Character A] want to trick [Character B] about _____? Why or why not? How can you tell that from the intonation and/or facial expressions of [Character A]?
3. Does [Character B] believe what [Character A] says? Why or why not? How can you tell that from the intonation and/or facial expressions of [Character B]?

B. Vocabulary

Choose the words in the script that have the following meaning:

4. [Definition of word 1] (noun): _____
5. [Definition of word 2] (verb): _____
6. [Definition of word 3] (adjective): _____
7. Based on the context of the story, think about the meaning of the words [word 4], [word 5], and [word 6]. In your opinion, what do they mean? (Be as specific as you can.)
8. Besides these words, write at least three other words you learned from the script. Write the new words and their definitions, as in questions 4, 5, and 6. (Do not copy from dictionaries. Write the meaning in your own words even if it is simpler than in the dictionaries.)

C. Project reflection

9. What are the challenges you faced when you worked on this project, and how did you overcome them? You can describe (1) language challenges—how to pronounce a difficult word, how to express the complex emotion of a character, etc.—and (2) other challenges, such as how to work together effectively and how to use the software.
10. What skills did you learn from this project? You can mention (1) language skills—English pronunciation and speaking, new vocabulary, etc.—and (2) soft skills, such as communication, technology, and teamwork.

Table 2. A sample project report

This approach lets students get used to the revoicing software and the requirements of the task, and it allows them to practice a variety of scenes with different language scenarios. For stronger students, teachers can even use this as a classroom activity to work on the script in class and dub on-site.

Regardless of which approach teachers choose, it is crucial that before students begin the task, they are provided with thorough guidelines. Teachers need to (1) demonstrate how to properly use the software or a tool for the task, (2) briefly discuss the script with the students in terms of the characters and language, and (3) clearly explain project expectations and the scoring rubric, if a rubric will be used. Students should not be expected to perform the script as well as professional actors would, but their speaking should be comprehensible and should effectively convey the characters' emotions.

The project report

The project report is optional but is particularly helpful when students are working with a challenging script. Completing the report is an important step for students to gain in-depth knowledge about the language and to dub more effectively. Usually, the characters' personality and the scenario determine the tone of the language. Teachers should elicit students' understanding on parts that result in interesting language production (e.g., fake happiness, sarcasm, irony). This allows teachers to focus students' attention on the connection between these interesting language aspects and the story context.

In my class, I ask students to write two or three sentences in response to open-ended questions in the project report. However, students at a higher level can write a paragraph for each question. Teachers can adapt the sample project report in Table 2 for different scripts. Note that questions 4, 5, and 6 ask students to select the words in the script that have the meaning of the given definitions, while question 7 is the opposite: it asks students to provide definitions of three other given words.

Scoring the final product

Developing an appropriate scoring rubric is essential (see Table 3 for a sample rubric). Teachers need to clarify this rubric for students before they complete the task. In my classroom, I score students based on the following:

1. *Synchronization*—the co-occurrence of the character's mouth movements and the student's voice. The score for this feature should be weighted lower than other features because students, not being professional voice actors, sometimes struggle with this.
2. *Intonation*—the ability to use variation in pitch to express emotions and sentence functions
3. *Pronunciation*—the ability to produce English sounds clearly and correctly
4. *Overall intelligibility*—the degree to which students' production can be comprehended and understood

Depending on the focus of the lesson, teachers can add components to the rubric (word stress, sentence stress, sentence functions, etc.).

PRACTICAL PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following are suggestions to help you consider two essential components for this project, an appropriate scene and a revoicing software/tool:

- Choosing an appropriate scene for the task can be challenging. Teachers need to consider three things: students' level, the language focus, and movie availability. A movie excerpt should not be longer than three minutes. Long excerpts will cause frustration rather than a fun experience. As mentioned above, teachers may prefer to use several short scenes because they maintain students' interest better and are more available than a long scene.
- Two-character scenes typically provide sufficient space for interaction. Teachers

SCORING RUBRIC			
Name: _____		Pair: _____	
Synchronization	Limited synchronization (0.5)	Some synchronization (0.75)	Synchronization most of the time (1)
Intonation	Very unnatural intonation (1)	Some unnatural intonation (2)	Natural intonation most of the time (3)
Pronunciation	Incorrect pronunciation most of the time (1)	Some incorrect pronunciation (2)	Correct pronunciation most of the time (3)
Overall intelligibility	Incomprehensible voice (1)	Incomprehensible voice sometimes (2)	Clear and comprehensible voice most of the time (3)
Total: ____/10			

Table 3. Sample scoring rubric for the movie-dubbing product (adapted from Talaván and Costal [2017]; Florente [2016])

- can also use a three-character or one-character scene. However, scenes with more than three characters are not recommended.
- Teachers can choose scenes with more-diverse spoken interactions rather than a simple daily-life conversation; this allows students to practice more-complex emotional intonations, although these scenes will be more challenging than simple scenes.
 - When choosing a scene, teachers should ensure that the speaking duration and the difficulty of the characters' speech are similar. That way, it will be easier to compare and assess students' performance.
 - I recommend that teachers use ClipFlair (2020b), a free, all-in-one platform that allows learners to revoice a movie excerpt directly. It works on both computers and mobile devices. With ClipFlair, teachers can choose a scene from the available movie collection, and no software is needed. ClipFlair (2020a) contains a quick tutorial on how to use the platform. Movie scripts of any genre (if needed) can be downloaded at the Internet Movie Script Database (2020).
 - Teachers need at least one revoicing tool for students if they do not use a platform like ClipFlair. Movie Maker is basic, easy to use, and free. It is available at Win Movie Maker (2020). In addition to self-help materials available on the site, Timmer

(2015) contains a tutorial on how to use Movie Maker for revoicing. The software works on computers; if students do not have computers, teachers can provide the muted clip so students can dub using movie-editor applications on their mobile devices. Teachers can also ask students to dub directly in the classroom if technology tools are inaccessible elsewhere.

- The procedure for this project can be modified. My project requires all students to dub the same animation excerpt. This makes it easier to compare students' performance; however, not all students will be happy with this choice. Allowing students to select scenes from different genres (animation, romance, action, etc.) gives them more autonomy, but extra work will be required. Teachers will need to ensure that all movie excerpts have roughly equal language difficulty and duration, and that the scripts meet the other requirements of the project.
- The procedure can be adapted for the online learning environment. Teachers can use one-character scenes for students to work individually if pair/group work cannot be implemented. Working outside class is possible for this project, so students can also devote most of their practice time at home after the initial assignment. Live dubbing, on the other hand, may not be appropriate for online learning.

CONCLUSION

This movie-dubbing project brings the real world into the classroom and helps students speak English more naturally. After completing the project, my students unanimously agreed that it should be continued in future courses because it was useful in developing their fluency and intonation. Students also felt that working on the project was a great amusement, compared with traditional classroom activities. I believe that the technique, with some adaptation, can be applied successfully with learners in many contexts. Even if teachers prefer to teach pronunciation by

using traditional techniques, I recommend a movie-dubbing project to supplement those techniques and to give students an enjoyable and memorable learning experience.

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Tran Thi Hai Yen was an English lecturer at Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam. She completed her MA in linguistics at the University of Kansas. She specializes in teaching English oral proficiency, pronunciation, and project-based courses.

READER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

Accommodating Learning Disabilities in the English Language Classroom (Pages 2–11)

Pre-Reading

1. How much experience do you have teaching students with learning disabilities in your English language classes?
2. How has your teacher training prepared you to teach students with learning disabilities?
3. Does the article provide any insights that can help you with your teaching, even if you don't think any of your current students has a learning disability?

Post-Reading

1. The authors point out that "identifying learning disabilities is a complex endeavor." If you feel that one of your students has a learning disability, what steps could you take to help that student? What assistance, if any, is available at your school?
2. The article presents four methods for helping students with learning disabilities. Take time to reread the descriptions of these methods. Which one(s) would you feel most comfortable using? What factors could determine which method(s) would be most practical and beneficial for students at your school?
4. The article provides an extensive list of helpful resources. With colleagues, choose one or more of the resources to explore together and discuss the ways the resource(s) can be helpful. Or have several colleagues choose one resource each, then have everyone share findings with one another. If possible, devote time during meetings to address ways you can accommodate students with learning disabilities, or schedule separate meetings specifically for that purpose.

Reading Eyes Wide Shut: Visualization, Language Learners, and Texts (Pages 12–19)

Pre-Reading

1. What does the term “eyes wide shut” mean to you?
2. Have you used any visualization techniques with your learners? How do you help your learners visualize what they are reading about?
3. Do you “see” scenes and characters in your mind when you read fiction? Do you use any specific techniques to do so or to reflect on what you’ve seen?
2. Jot down what you remember about each of the five strategies discussed in the article. Which would you be most likely to try first with your students? Which can you use most effectively if you are teaching virtually?
3. The authors give a detailed example of using logographic cues as a visualization technique. Try making cues of your own with a passage from a text that you teach. What is the experience like? Then, after giving your students examples of logographic cues, ask them to make logographic cues based on that same passage. Have students compare their cues with one another’s—and with yours. What similarities and differences are there, and how do they help you understand the passage in different ways?

Post-Reading

1. Reread the excerpt from “Love of Life” that appears at the beginning of the article. Can you visualize everything clearly? If you have trouble visualizing any of the details in that excerpt, why do you think that is? What causes you to be able to visualize some things more clearly than others?

Using Movie Dubbing to Improve Natural English Pronunciation Skills (Pages 20–25)

Pre-Reading

1. Have you ever used movies in your classes? What were your purposes for doing so?
2. What are some of the ways you help students improve their English pronunciation? Which technique has been most successful? Why do you think it has worked well?
3. What is movie dubbing, and how do you think it can help students’ pronunciation?
4. If not, how might you (and your colleagues) give your students a chance to benefit from such a project? Could it be an English Club activity, for example?
3. Would you rather have all students dub the same excerpt or work on different excerpts? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and which would work better for you and your students?

Post-Reading

1. Use the techniques described in the article to dub part of a movie yourself. What is the experience like? What challenges do you face? How can trying the techniques first improve your ability to help students with their own dubbing projects?
2. The author presents the project as a major part of a course. Are you able to do something similar with a course you teach?
4. The author suggests using an excerpt from *The Lion King*. What other movies, or scenes within movies, could you use for a dubbing project? When you watch English-language movies, stay alert for scenes that could work; make a list of them. What criteria are most important?

Understanding Fast Speech with Online Videos and Quizzes

by STEPHANIE HANSON

Understanding fast speech can be an ongoing challenge for English learners of all levels. Even after years of study, learners might be accustomed to clear, slow classroom English and struggle with understanding the reductions that proficient speakers of English use in fast, fluent speech. Some common reductions in American English include *gonna* for *going to*, *tellem* for *tell him*, and *didja* for *did you*. Luckily, because these reductions often follow linguistic patterns, they can be taught.

Research shows that direct implicit instruction on fast-speech reductions aids learner comprehension. Lessons on reduced forms can significantly improve students' scores on dictation tests (Brown and Hilferty 2006; Matsuzawa 2006) and on listening-comprehension tests (Ahmadian and Matour 2014). Research also shows that lessons on reduced forms can improve test scores not just immediately after instruction, but also on a retention test a month or so later (Cormier, Zhang, and Matsuzawa 2013).

Many online resources exist to help students learn about fast-speech reductions commonly used in English. The Minnesota English Language Program at the University of Minnesota developed five videos, available at <https://ccaps.umn.edu/esl-resources/students/listening>, that explain blending, flap, H elision, syllable elision, and

common fast phrases. Each video is about one minute long and describes these fast-speech phenomena with an oral explanation, visual cues, and several examples. In the H elision video ("Dropping the H Sound"), for example, students learn when the /h/ sound is commonly dropped from words such as *he*, *him*, *her*, *have*, and *has*. In the "Blending Sounds" video, students learn when combinations of sounds can change to another sound. For example, /t/ + /y/ = /ch/, so a phrase like *not yet* will often sound more like *nochet* or /natʃet/.

Each video also has an accompanying audio quiz, with several examples of each reduction. Students can listen to a short sentence containing that reduction and check their comprehension of it. For students who want a more challenging quiz, there is a sixth audio quiz that mixes sentences with all five types of reductions.

These online videos and interactive quizzes were designed as self-study tools for international students at U.S. universities. Fortunately, these materials can be used anywhere with teens or adults who wish to improve their listening skills. You can share the URL with students who want to improve their listening comprehension, then direct them to watch one or more videos and take the accompanying quizzes.

These materials can also be used in a prepared class lesson. First, choose one of the reduced forms that you want to teach. For the purposes of this example, we will work with syllable elision.

- 1. Warm-up** (2–3 minutes). Ask students if they have noticed that English speakers in TV shows, movies, and songs sometimes drop parts of words. Elicit any examples they can think of. Common answers might include *I wanna*, *I'm gonna*, and *Whatcha doin'*? If students can't think of any examples, you can provide a few.
- 2. Video explanation** (3–4 minutes). Show the video “Dropping Syllables” and ask students to write down examples of syllable elision from the video. You may want to play the video two or three times.
- 3. Comprehension check 1** (5 minutes). Ask students what example words they wrote down. Make a list of these on the board. Ask students which syllable in each word gets deleted; draw a line through that part of the word to visually show the syllable elision.
- 4. Comprehension check 2** (5–10 minutes). Ask students what the rule or pattern is for dropping syllables. You can do this comprehension check informally as part of a whole-class discussion. If you want to formally assess students' understanding, give them a multiple-choice quiz where they need to select the correct rule (easier version) or explain the rule in their own words (harder version).
- 5. Application** (5–10 minutes). Put students into small groups and give them a list of words (e.g., *average, beverage, business, camera, chocolate, conference, difference, different, evening, every, family, favorite, federal, general, grocery, interest, memory, numerous, probably, salary, separate, several, traveling*). Ask them to identify which syllable should be dropped from each word to fit the pronunciation

pattern. You could also ask groups to brainstorm other words that fit this pattern. Debrief with the whole class to check their answers.

- 6. Listening practice** (5–10 minutes in class, or as homework). Have students take the “Dropping Syllables” listening quiz at <https://ccaps.umn.edu/esl-resources/students/listening/listening-quizzes>. They could do this during class in a computer lab or on smartphones, or as homework to practice their listening skills.
- 7. Listening-comprehension assessment** (5–10 minutes). Make your own listening quiz by selecting five words that commonly drop a syllable in fast speech. Create a short sentence with each word. For higher-proficiency students, give a dictation quiz using full sentences. Make sure you say the sentences relatively quickly so students must understand fast speech to succeed on the quiz. For lower-level students, give a cloze quiz where they write only the missing word (which is a quickly spoken word that is missing a syllable) instead of the entire sentence.
- 8. Rule-comprehension assessment** (5–10 minutes; optional). Test students on their understanding of the pattern for dropping syllables. One option is to ask them to write ten words that lose a syllable when pronounced quickly. They can also mark which syllable is dropped in each word. Another option is to give them a list of words and ask them to cross out the syllable that is dropped.

While this sample lesson could take about an hour of class time if used in its entirety, you can pick and choose the activities that are most useful to your students and adjust the timing to suit your learning objectives.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE

If you are looking for additional listening resources to expose students to more fast

speech, YouGlish.com may be useful. This website allows you to search for words or phrases in YouTube videos, giving you spoken examples of the word or phrase in each video result. Because the spoken samples are pulled from millions of YouTube videos, some results might not be appropriate for your students (e.g., strong language, politically sensitive topics, adult content). The website also contains a lot of advertisements. It is therefore recommended that you as the teacher select some appropriate videos before class to use with students.

As an example, you can search for “interest” in the search box on YouGlish.com and choose three or four appropriate video clips that appear in the results. Save these videos to use in class. Before showing the videos to your students, ask them to listen for whether the speaker says *INT-e-rest* or *INT-rest*. How many syllables do they hear in each example? This gives students an opportunity to hear the word pronounced by several different speakers and confirm whether or not each example follows the fast-speech pronunciation rule (some speakers might not drop syllables if they are speaking slowly or carefully). You could also prepare a worksheet for students to complete while listening to YouGlish examples that you pre-selected. For each video, students can circle whether they hear the target word pronounced with two syllables or three.

This sample lesson and the optional extension activities are meant to give you ideas for how to use the videos and audio quizzes at <https://ccaps.umn.edu/esl-resources/students/listening-for-listening-practice-with-your-students>. You can choose and adapt the activities that will best suit your teaching context. A combination of (1) explaining rules of fast-speech reductions (with the videos), (2) analyzing example words and phrases, and (3) testing student comprehension of fast speech (with the audio quizzes) can help students be better prepared to recognize and understand common reductions when they hear them outside the classroom.

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Stephanie Hanson is a Teaching Specialist at the University of Minnesota English Language Program. She has been an English Language Specialist in Venezuela, Turkey, Brazil, and Vietnam, and a Fulbright TEFL Scholar in Mexico.

One of These Does Not Belong: Creating Interesting Multiple-Choice Questions for Teaching and Testing

by MATTHEW MIKLAS

With the increase in online teaching sessions, instructors face the need to engage and challenge their students in new ways. Online quiz sites provide teachers with a cost-free means of gaining immediate feedback on their students' progress. However, students can become bored if multiple-choice quizzes do not vary and are used too often. There is a simple means of writing multiple-choice questions—which most often comprise a stem (the question) and four answer choices—to make them more engaging and challenging for learners of all levels and teaching contexts, online or off-line.

CONCEPT

You are probably familiar with the type of test question that asks something such as this:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) cat
- b) box
- c) rabbit
- d) cow

We recognize that b) is the intended answer, as it is the only non-animal among the choices, with three distractors. The question may also be written as “Which of these is different from the others?” We can apply this approach to writing multiple-choice questions to increase our students' recognition of correct and incorrect language items. The approach can be used with questions related to grammar, syntax, or content.

The premise is simple: the *different* answer—the one that does not belong—may be different because it's the only *correct* item among the four alternatives, or it may be different because it's the only *incorrect* item among the four alternatives. Put more explicitly, if choices a), b), and c) contain no mistakes and d) contains a mistake, then d) will be the intended answer. If choices a), c), and d) all contain mistakes but choice b) contains no mistakes, then b) will be the intended answer.

What serves the students' cognitive engagement is that they don't know whether the intended answer is the correct or incorrect item, and so they

We can apply this approach to writing multiple-choice questions to increase our students' recognition of correct and incorrect language items.

The approach can be used with an array of teaching applications.

must analyze and consider each of the four items. Their task with each quiz question thus becomes twofold: determine whether most of the alternatives are correct or incorrect, and then identify which alternative stands apart from the others. It is error identification that requires an interposed stage of analysis.

APPLICATION

Suppose your students are learning the language of describing similarities and differences. Answer choices could be written as follows:

- a) *Grilling resemble roasting.*
- b) *Grilling like roasting.*
- c) *Grilling resembles roasting.*
- d) *Grilling be like roasting.*

Only choice c) is acceptable, as all other choices contain mistakes.

Or students need to find the only incorrect choice:

- a) *Phuket is differ from Bangkok.*
- b) *Phuket differs from Bangkok.*
- c) *Phuket and Bangkok are different.*
- d) *Bangkok is different from Phuket.*

In this case, we recognize a) as the intended answer, as it is the only one that contains a mistake.

The approach can be used with an array of teaching applications:

- The presentation stage of a new linguistic item
- Formal assessment
- Informal online quiz games, such as Kahoot! and Quizizz
- Delayed error correction after marking a writing task
- A diagnostic test at the start of a lesson on a linguistic item
- The clarification stage of a lesson to check learner comprehension of the form or grammar structure just presented
- Syntactical or orthographic error recognition
- Student-created quiz questions for pair work or group work
- A simplified prelude to introducing analytic thinking

Consider using this technique to introduce students to a language item in the presentation stage of explicit teaching. Below is an example of how you can apply it when you are teaching students not to use the full infinitive with *to* after a modal verb:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) *We should to go.*
- b) *They could to help.*
- c) *I want to stay.*
- d) *He might to call.*

The One of These Does Not Belong technique prompts students to fully process at least three alternatives to discern a pattern.

By eliciting responses from the class as to which answer is different in the sense of being the only correct or only incorrect alternative—here, c) is the only correct choice—teachers can gauge students' familiarity with the grammar rule of *modal + base verb only*, or just their ability to recognize modal verbs, as a starting point for the lesson.

If teachers use this approach at the beginning and then at the end of a session explicitly teaching *modal + base verb only*, a review near the end of the lesson may look like this:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) *We must try.*
- b) *They have to call.*
- c) *I can to wait.*
- d) *She may come.*

Here, with c) being the only incorrect sentence, students must evaluate which verbs are modal and which aren't, including the proper vs. improper inclusion of *to*, in order to arrive at the intended answer. Starting and finishing with One of These Does Not Belong adds an agreeable circular aspect to lessons.

In an immersion environment, the approach could be used with content:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) *Birds cannot fly.*
- b) *Dogs are mammals.*

c) *Kangaroos live in Australia.*

d) *Tigers are carnivores.*

Here, a) is the intended answer. It is the only untrue statement.

You can also use the approach for checking spelling:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) *hight*
- b) *strength*
- c) *waight*
- d) *rashio*

With this question, b) is the intended answer, as *strength* is the only choice spelled correctly.

BENEFITS

With most multiple-choice questions, students need only to scan to find the correct answer, which they can often do without reading all of the distractors. However, the One of These Does Not Belong technique prompts students to fully process at least three alternatives to discern a pattern—whether the distractors are mostly correct or mostly incorrect—before isolating and identifying the intended answer. Having to do so means that the students must process more language items at a higher rate of iteration compared to what they would process in having to identify only one correct answer among three or more incorrect choices.

Another benefit is that once students are acclimated to the approach, it takes no more

It takes no more time for the instructor to design the questions than it would to design standard multiple-choice questions.

time for the instructor to design the questions than it would to design standard multiple-choice questions. The only additional time requirement is having the students understand the concept.

BEST PRACTICES

When introducing the concept, you may want to show examples that pose no challenge for students to recognize as correct or incorrect. In a class of pre-intermediate learners, an example may look something like this:

Which one of these does not belong?

- a) *worked*
- b) *played*
- c) *speaked*
- d) *learned*

It follows that the next step is showing the inverse of the above—three incorrect usages with one correct usage—so that students understand that they are not seeking only the choice containing a mistake. The different item, and thus the intended answer, might be a single correct choice:

- a) *sitted*
- b) *runned*
- c) *taked*
- d) *walked*

This way, students get used to the need to analyze all choices and notice which one stands out as different. Said another way, they

see that the intended answer is the single choice that contains a mistake before (or after) seeing a question where the intended answer is the single choice with no mistakes.

After you reveal the intended answer, it may be useful to color-code the correct and incorrect language items. For example, you might mark correct in green text and incorrect in red text to show that the color that appears only once among the four choices is the intended answer. This can be especially helpful for more visually oriented learners. While color-coding correct and incorrect choices would be most convenient in a classroom equipped with a projector and presentation software such as PowerPoint, overhead-projector transparencies or flip charts could use color-coding as well.

If your time is limited or your students' learning acumen is high, a quick introduction may take the form of just writing your quiz questions in Kahoot! or Quizizz, as such:

Which one is different [3 wrong, 1 right / 3 right, 1 wrong]?

TIPS

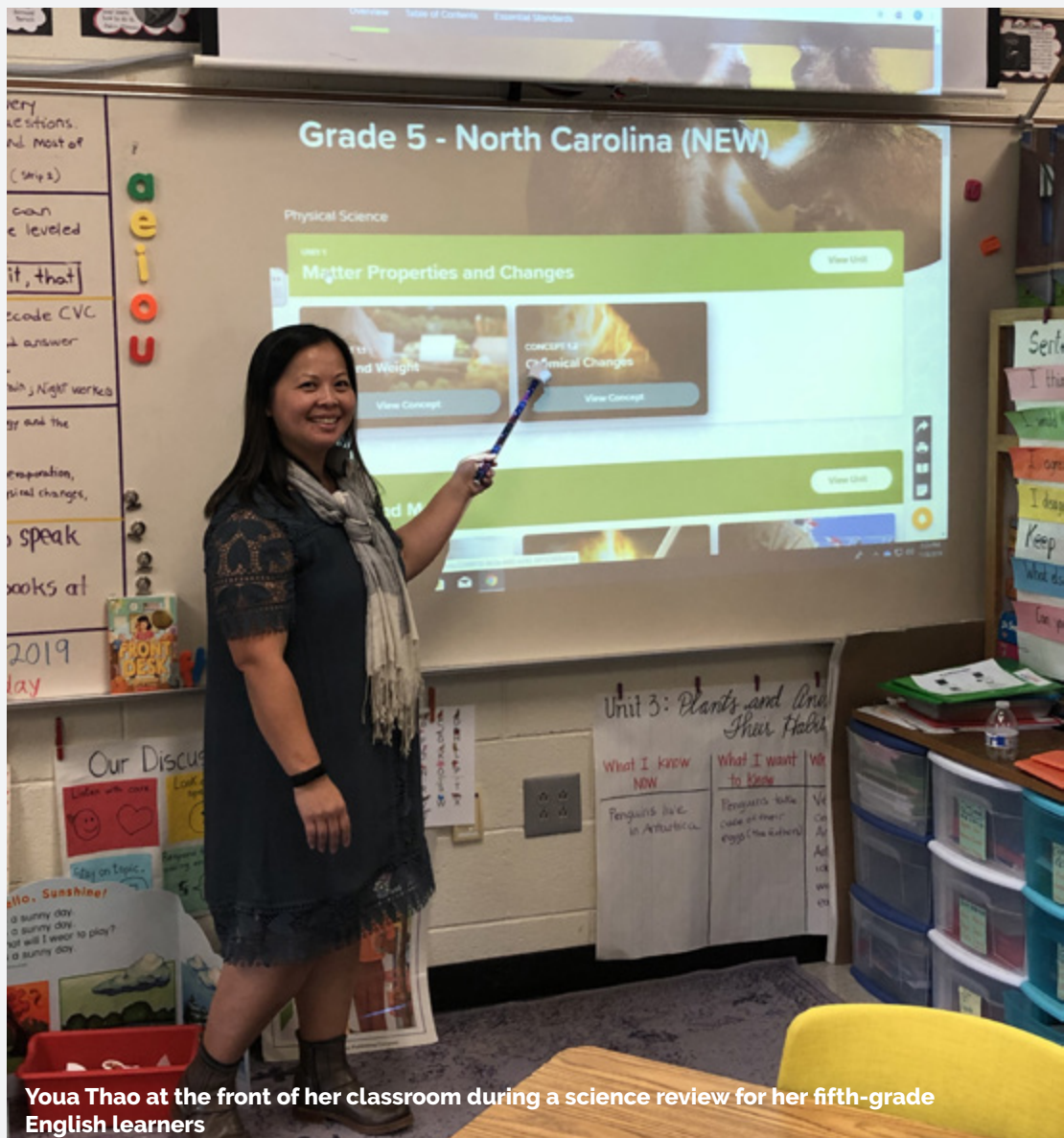
- When writing the incorrect alternatives, try to use mistakes that your learners frequently make. This is especially effective in monolingual learning environments where more students can benefit from having the specific mistakes they make, based on L1 interference, negatively reinforced. Marked writing tasks are a useful reserve from which to cull incorrect alternatives/distractors.

When introducing the concept, you may want to show examples that pose no challenge for students to recognize as correct or incorrect.

- If you use this approach in Kahoot!, Quizizz, or another online quiz site where there is a time limit, don't make sentences too long. Students can easily be fatigued by having to repeatedly read long sentences under pressure.
- Adding more distractors per question is likely to make the question less challenging rather than more challenging, as students may perceive the pattern of correct or incorrect without having to read all six or eight distractors. To challenge learners, write additional questions using One of These Does Not Belong rather than including more distractors.
- Using a streamlined version with only three choices—two distractors with one intended answer—is a possible intermediate step to providing four choices. Providing three choices, as a consistent format for creating One of These Does Not Belong items, is also a variation that may better serve younger, less confident, or mixed-level classes.

Matthew Miklas is an English instructor at Thammasat University in Bangkok.

Stepping into Youa Thao's English classroom at Blythe Elementary School, you can see clearly that she is an organized and thoughtful educator who makes every effort to create a welcoming environment and build positive relationships with the learners she encounters. The walls are covered in colorful charts detailing conversation starters, story elements, habits of effective learners, shared classroom agreements, and more. Chairs are arranged around a main table to encourage interaction and collaboration amongst students; there are carpeted areas with comfortable seating options as well.



Youa Thao at the front of her classroom during a science review for her fifth-grade English learners

About 950 students are enrolled at Blythe, and almost a third are language-minority students, meaning they actively use a language other than English at home.

Blythe is one of 176 schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district, which serves about 147,000 students in the city of Charlotte and surrounding areas in the state of North Carolina. About 950 students are enrolled at Blythe, and almost a third are language-minority students, meaning they actively use a language other than English at home. Ten languages and 11 birth countries are represented in the student population. Amongst the 151 students who qualify for English language support—usually through specialized language instruction—due to their proficiency scores on an annual English language assessment, about 40 percent are intermediate level and around 35 percent are beginners or newcomers (newly arrived to the United States or to U.S. schools).

The school district's English Learner (EL) Services department supports teachers like Ms. Thao and students learning English. There are around 47,000 language-minority students and about 24,000 English learners throughout the district in kindergarten through grade 12. The EL Services department is supported with a combination of local, state, and federal funding. These funds are used to pay teachers, purchase specialized curriculum materials, buy technology to be used with students learning English, provide professional development, and more.

At the start of each school year, Ms. Thao shares a presentation titled “What My People Group Means to Me” with her students. The

presentation is about her cultural heritage. She tells the story of her parents coming to the United States as Hmong refugees from Laos, her early life with her siblings growing up in the state of California, and how far her family and community have come since arriving in the United States. She reflects that her students are often in awe of what they learn about her and, as a result, feel more inspired to share their own stories. Speaking about her students, she says, “We need to realize that their stories matter and their stories help us as educators to push them so that they will have the motivation to strive to want to be lifelong learners.” This thoughtful consideration and valuing of the unique qualities and needs of each learner is the driving force behind Ms. Thao's teaching philosophy and everything she does for her students.

Although she has always been familiar with the experiences and challenges faced by families similar to her own, Ms. Thao didn't start her career as an English teacher. After she completed her bachelor's degree in education focused on teaching science and social studies, she accepted a position teaching history to first-year high-school students. One of her classes had many students who were English learners. She became fascinated by a student who was unable to read in English but could read fluently in Arabic. Working with this student inspired Ms. Thao to pursue a master's degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).

At the start of each school year, Ms. Thao shares a presentation titled “What My People Group Means to Me” with her students.

In most U.S. schools, language-minority students are generally required to take the same subjects and examinations as students who are native English speakers. However, they often receive support and specialized instruction from an EL teacher, like Ms. Thao, who has extensive training in delivering content-based English language instruction. Education policy varies from state to state, but there are usually guidelines for how much specialized instruction English learners receive, often based on each student's English proficiency level.

Most states require all English learners to take an annual assessment to measure their proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The annual assessment is rigorous and designed to elicit responses that demonstrate students' social language skills and their fluency with academic English vocabulary and language structures. Scores from the assessment help EL teachers group students and plan their schedules; the scores also determine the amount and type of English language instruction students receive

and when students no longer need English language support.

Many EL teachers in the United States have some flexibility in terms of how they deliver instruction. Sometimes, learners are pulled out of general-education classrooms to form small groups that meet in the English classroom, often referred to as the “pull-out model.” In this model, EL teachers provide instruction on the same subject being taught in the general-education classroom, but with more emphasis on integrating language and content. Another option is co-teaching, sometimes called the “push-in model,” where EL teachers and general-education teachers plan and teach together in the same classroom, for a whole day or a portion of the day. Models of co-teaching include having both teachers teach together, splitting classes into two groups, using stations with each teacher leading a small group while other students work independently, and others. There are also bilingual education and language immersion programs in the United States, but they aren't common.



Ms. Thao's English classroom at Blythe Elementary School



The front of Blythe Elementary School

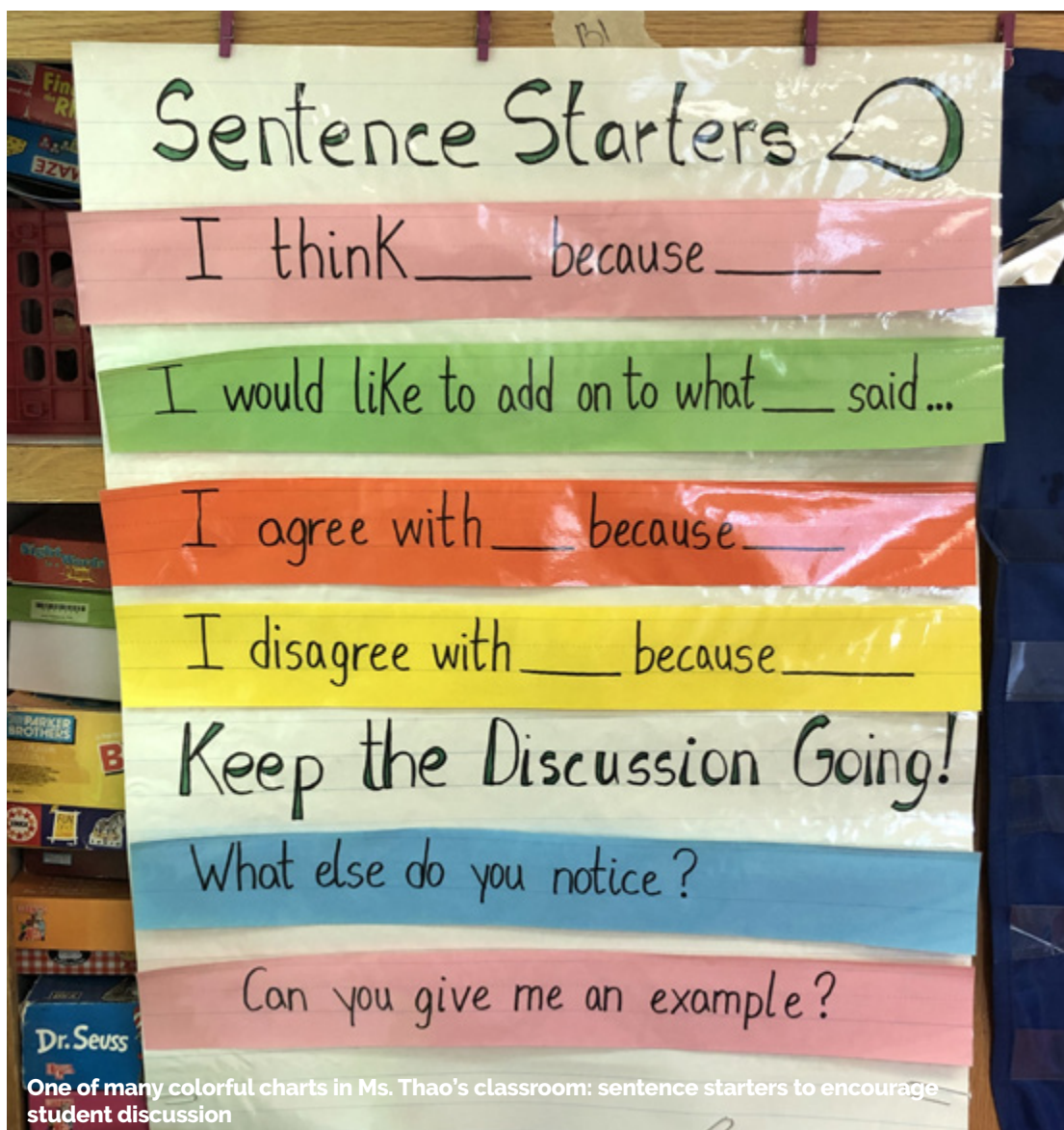
Ms. Thao works closely with another full-time EL teacher at her school to develop a student-centered schedule for learners who receive specialized English instruction. She says, “We just don’t stick to one program. It’s based on the child’s needs or the group’s needs, and so we are flexible. We’re willing to reevaluate and even discuss with one another. My coworker and myself will look at data; we’ll look at the overall learning styles of the students to see which group would actually fit their needs.”

In a typical week, Ms. Thao teaches about 14 to 16 groups of students, which works out to about ten groups per day. (Some students receive English instruction every day, and others only once or twice per week.) Generally, she uses the pull-out model for newcomers or beginner-level students and the push-in model for intermediate or

higher-level students. Her groups usually meet for 20 to 40 minutes, depending on the students’ needs and schedules for each grade level. Some more-proficient learners fall under consultative status, meaning that Ms. Thao checks in with their general-education teachers regularly to determine whether the students are succeeding academically or may need additional English language support.

Ms. Thao says the materials she uses during her lessons vary. “It just depends on my learners. I am flexible. My lesson plans are never the same from year to year or month to month.” She notes that she is fortunate to have access to many types of teaching materials. The EL Services department supplies EL teachers with resources such as leveled book sets for guided reading; textbooks with accompanying songs, graphic organizers,

Generally, she uses the pull-out model for newcomers or beginner-level students and the push-in model for intermediate or higher-level students.



manipulatives, workbooks, and assessments; phonics kits with music, big books, and practice books; grade-level content-based reading materials; and picture dictionaries. Additionally, Ms. Thao is able to access the textbooks and curriculum resources that her general-education co-teachers use in their grade-level classrooms.

However, in a recent lesson, Ms. Thao created something from scratch: an interactive study guide for students to complete on the classroom laptops. The guide reviews concepts from the fifth-grade science curriculum, such as physical vs. chemical changes. However, Ms. Thao has tailored the content and activities

for students who are learning English by including visuals, fill-in-the-blank exercises, sorting activities, familiar anchor charts from the classroom, videos, and other scaffolds. Throughout the lesson, the four students are engaged and eager to work. Ms. Thao has created a classroom environment where they feel comfortable because they can ask questions and are not afraid to make mistakes. The students feel free to speak up and share ideas, but they also respect each other and Ms. Thao. She encourages them to help each other and work together.

How often Ms. Thao teaches science can vary from year to year, but providing science

In a recent lesson, Ms. Thao created something from scratch: an interactive study guide for students to complete on the classroom laptops.

instruction tailored to English learners is one of her strengths. She has presented science-based professional-development sessions at district meetings for other EL teachers. At the end of fifth grade, all students in North Carolina are required to take a state assessment in science. Ms. Thao presented a professional-development session on using an online program to conduct virtual interactive lab experiments. The school district subscribes to the program, which provides educational videos and other digital content for science, social studies, and math. She also created several video playlists based on fifth-grade science content that teachers could adapt and use with activities to prepare learners for the state test. The lab experiments and playlists help students build background knowledge and review key concepts that will be included in the state assessment.

Ms. Thao has also led training for her general-education colleagues. In the past, she delivered workshops on co-teaching models, working with refugee students, and guided reading instruction. At Blythe, she has trained her colleagues on how to use a state database to access demographic information and annual proficiency scores for English language learners. Additionally, Ms. Thao says that while co-teaching in the classrooms of her colleagues, she models teaching strategies that she uses with her students and answers questions from co-teachers about best practices.

Ms. Thao has also served as a supervising teacher and mentor for a university student working toward a master's degree in TESOL. The student teacher completed a practicum (usually referred to as "student teaching" in the United States) in Ms. Thao's English classroom and received advice and feedback on lessons and interactions with students.

Along with her fellow EL teacher at Blythe, Ms. Thao has also led sessions for parents and families about how to support their child's education at home and through involvement at school.

Despite Ms. Thao's rapport with her students and colleagues, she acknowledges that there are challenging parts of her work. Communication between home and school can sometimes be difficult, and some students arrive late due to heavy morning traffic near the school. In order to complete her lesson planning and preparation, she comes to school early in the mornings, leaves late in the afternoons, and often dedicates time to school work over the weekends. The planning time built into her daily schedule is often spent in meetings with grade-level teachers or her EL teammate, catching up on paperwork, checking on consultative students, or squeezing in extra support for learners who need it.

Ms. Thao also reflects that helping newcomer students in a traditional school setting can be difficult. She explains that many newcomers need to acquire basic interpersonal communication skills in English and learn routines and expectations of U.S. schools; at the same time, newcomers are expected to grasp grade-level content through instruction that is delivered exclusively in English. In addition, not all general-education teachers who have newcomer students in their classes know where to start or how to help. In North Carolina, some school districts have established newcomer schools that provide these students with an intensive orientation to U.S. schooling and English language skills for one or two years before they join a traditional school. Ms. Thao's district currently has no newcomer school, so she provides teachers and newcomer students with as much support

“I do tell a lot of my newcomers, ‘I need you to realize that your first language is important and that when you grow up it will help you. It will help you understand the world that you’re living in.’”

as she can. Always focused on her students’ strengths, Ms. Thao says, “I do tell a lot of my newcomers, ‘I need you to realize that your first language is important and that when you grow up it will help you. It will help you understand the world that you’re living in, but at the same time it will also give you opportunities to do more.’”

Ms. Thao has adjusted to teaching virtually during the global pandemic by conducting about seven 30- to 40-minute sessions per day on Zoom. She meets daily with the teachers she works with and has planning time for herself. She has adapted her teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of her learners. This includes prioritizing time to model language and give students opportunities to practice speaking with prompts and content-area vocabulary during virtual lessons. Her students also watch recorded lessons in English that are provided by the school district. The biggest challenges she describes are issues with technology or Internet hotspots and a chaotic learning environment for multiple siblings sharing space and resources at home.

The overall impression of Ms. Thao is of a flexible teacher who is nurturing and supportive while setting high expectations and demanding the best work from her students. She acknowledges that every learner has his or her individual needs and strengths, and she adjusts her expectations accordingly to meet students where they are and help them grow. When asked what she is most proud of as an educator, Ms. Thao says, “Building relationships with my students and helping them understand that they matter and that they are valued and they are able to actually succeed.” With such an inspiring and

dedicated teacher as their guide, it is likely that they will.

This article was written by **Amy Hanna**, who has trained teachers and taught English to students in primary school, university, and adult education classrooms in the United States and abroad. Currently, she supports the U.S. Department of State’s English language programs by developing digital content for English learners and teachers.

Photos by Amy Hanna

Identifying Narrative Elements in Literature: A Poster Project

by **NICHOLAS GORDON**

LEVEL: Lower Intermediate to Advanced

TIME REQUIRED: Two or three 90-minute class periods. During the first class, you will clarify the task, form groups, and direct students as they begin planning and designing their stories and posters. In the second class, students will finalize their posters and give presentations. Depending on your class size or class length, you may need a third class period to complete the final project preparations and presentations.

GOALS: To use writing, speaking, and listening skills while reflecting on and analyzing narrative elements in a fictional text; to work cooperatively with groupmates to develop a fictional story that includes specified narrative elements; to collaborate with groupmates to create a poster that identifies and depicts the narrative elements; to present the story and poster to peers; to practice giving and receiving peer feedback

MATERIALS: Poster paper or large sheets of paper; markers, crayons, or colored pencils; glue or glue sticks; scissors; chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers; newspapers or magazines with images that can be used to illustrate the posters (optional); projector (optional); photocopier or printer (optional)

BACKGROUND: In my university and secondary-school literature classes, I have

found that giving students a chance to work with the narrative elements of literature through creative poster projects improves their understanding of difficult texts and helps them visualize ways in which these elements cohere to create a story. Having students identify and give examples of each element of literature for a simple story can prepare them for the rigors of identifying and analyzing those same elements in more complicated texts (Vari 2020).

Because poster projects require a variety of contributions from group members, the projects can address a range of learning styles. Visual learners can benefit from arranging the poster's spatial layout, kinesthetic learners can benefit from the hands-on aspect of creating the poster, social learners can benefit from the teamwork involved, and so forth. If students complete this poster-creation task virtually as described in the Variation section, they will also develop and use digital-literacy skills.

Furthermore, this activity can be adapted and used in diverse class contexts. I have completed this project with groups of students who had a firm understanding of the narrative elements of literature and with students who were just being introduced to these elements.

In sum, assigning this flexible poster project offers students a creative way to collaborate with classmates and demonstrate their

understanding of narrative elements in action. Give it a try. Your students' stories and posters might surprise and delight you—mine did!

PREPARATION:

1. Collect and prepare poster-creation materials. If possible, gather old magazines, newspapers, and other print media that students can cut up and use while creating their posters. Using print images can add colorful content to the project and enhance student creativity. My students often first find print images they like, then form their fictional narratives around those images. However, if you do not have access to these materials or prefer not to use print images, students can draw the images on their posters.

2. The project directions in this article assume students have received level-appropriate instruction on the narrative elements of literature. If necessary, prepare to review these concepts at the start of the activity or during the class period prior to beginning the project. Terms to review include the following:

- **Plot** – what happens in the story; the general sequence or outline of events

- **Character(s)** – the people, animals, or other beings in the story
- **Setting** – where and when the story takes place
- **Atmosphere** – the feeling(s), emotion(s), and mood created by the setting and story
- **Conflict** – the problem in the story; the thing the character(s) must struggle with
- **Resolution** – how the conflict plays out and the story ends

For advanced classes, you might add and review other literary elements and devices such as *protagonist/antagonist*, *theme*, *symbol*, *tone*, and *imagery*.

3. Depending on your aims, select either the Poster Presentation Survey (Figure 1) or the Poster Presentation Rubric (Figure 2) to use as a peer-feedback form during the presentations. Adapt the contents of either form to suit your desired project objectives. Make the needed number of copies or printouts of the peer-feedback form you select, or prepare to have students manually copy the form, based on an example you will draw or display on the board.

<p>Story Title:</p> <hr/> <p>1. What is the story's setting?</p> <hr/> <p>2. What is the conflict in the story?</p> <hr/> <p>3. What is the resolution of the story?</p> <hr/> <p>4. What is something you liked about this poster?</p> <hr/> <p>5. What is one question you have about this poster?</p> <hr/>

Figure 1. Poster Presentation Survey (for peer feedback)

Story Title:			
Question	Yes	No	Somewhat
Did the presentation include the required narrative elements?			
Did each group member speak during the presentation?			
Did the group members speak clearly?			
Was the presentation easy to understand?			
Did the presentation have a good pace, and was it interesting?			
Comments:			

Figure 2. Poster Presentation Rubric (for peer feedback)

PROCEDURE:

1. To activate students' prior knowledge, hold a discussion in which students describe essential elements of literature in a text the class is reading together, a book most students are likely to have read, or a popular movie. On the board, write a list of the narrative elements you will include in the poster project, filling in examples and details that students supply for each item. For instance, many of my students have seen the movie *Titanic* and can describe elements such as these: *characters* = Jack, Rose, Rose's parents, Rose's suitor (Caledon, a villain); *setting* = in 1912, a magnificent new ship in the Atlantic Ocean with elegant upper-class decks and crowded, plain lower-class decks; *conflicts* = the ship is sinking, class divisions between the main characters; and so on.
2. To make sure students have a clear understanding of the required elements, discuss them in as much depth as your students' ability levels allow. For instance, using the *Titanic* example, with regard to the setting, you might ask students for descriptive adjectives about the ship in the beginning of the story, as well as adjectives to describe the ship as the story progresses. Then, have students describe how the shifts in the setting affect the story's atmosphere.
3. Next, explain the requirements of the poster project. Using level-appropriate language, tell students that, in groups, they will do the following:
 - a. Make a poster that uses a combination of print images from magazines or other sources (optional), drawings, and written text to create and share an original fictional story. The poster must depict six narrative elements: *plot*, *character(s)*, *setting*, *atmosphere*, *conflict*, and *resolution*. (Add more-complex narrative elements for advanced classes, if desired.)
 - b. Make sure that their group's poster includes the following, at a minimum:
 - a story title
 - at least one image or drawing for each narrative element
 - two or three sentences describing each image or plot point
 - c. Present their poster to the class by telling the fictional story it represents. Each group member must speak during the presentation,

reading the accompanying text and describing what is happening, based on the poster's images.

- d. Give and receive feedback on the presentations using a peer-feedback form. (At this point, share and review the feedback form you selected in Step 3 of the Preparation section to make sure the learners understand the assessment process).

As you provide the instructions, emphasize the creative nature of the task, reminding students to have fun with their story and strive for surprises as they use the narrative elements. Each story is a work of imagination, and there are no rigid rules that the stories must follow, as long as they include the required poster elements.

4. Further explain that each group's story can be realistic, fantastical, or some combination of the two. To clarify, give two examples of possible fictional poster-story plot outlines, writing or projecting each on the board:

Realistic poster-story example:

Carlos wants to go to the carnival, but it's on a school night, and his parents won't let him. When he tries to sneak

out of the house, his dog starts barking and wakes his parents up.

Fantastical poster-story example:

Amina finds an old key that gives her the ability to fly. She flies to Paris for a visit but loses the key and struggles to get back home.

5. Draw or project a basic plot chart (Figure 3) on the board.
6. Review the parts of the chart to help students understand the narrative *movement* or *flow* of stories and to visualize how they might describe their story posters during the presentations. For example, they will first explain who is in the story and where it is taking place (introductory events). Then, they will describe what the problem is and what is happening (conflict and rising action), and so on. Remind students that the chart and the two example stories are stripped down to a basic plotline. For their fictional stories, students should add details related to the plot, setting, and other narrative elements.
7. Based on your class composition and aims, put students into mixed-ability, similar-ability, or random groups of four to six students. Have students sit with their groupmates.

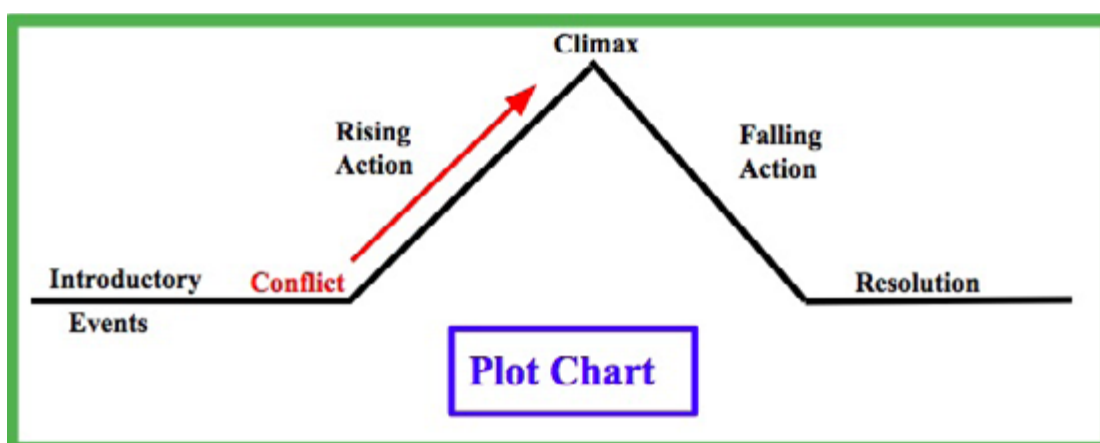


Figure 3. Plot chart

8. Discuss group roles with the class. On the board, write or project a list of the roles and responsibilities that each group member might contribute:

- **Timekeeper** – makes sure the team stays on task in the allotted time
- **Illustrator** – draws the imagery on the poster
- **Imagery finder** – supervises finding the magazine/newspaper/website imagery
- **Scribe** – writes the group-developed descriptions on the poster
- **Visuals supervisor** – arranges and glues print images or illustrations
- **Story supervisor** – makes sure all the required narrative elements of literature are included in the poster

You might ask the class to suggest other roles and add them to the list. Tell the class they will decide the roles within their groups. Students can volunteer for more than one role, and the functions of some roles may overlap. Direct the groups to discuss and distribute the roles—but tell students that everyone is expected to contribute to the creation of the story.

9. Confirm that there are no additional questions about the project, and then ask groups to begin working on their stories. Remind them that they can use print images to inspire their stories and that creating a plot chart can help them organize their narratives.
10. Based on the available time in your schedule for this project, set and communicate the time limits for story development and poster creation as well as for practicing the group presentation. I usually provide about 30 minutes for

story development and poster creation and 15 minutes for presentation preparation.

11. Circulate and make sure groups are including the required project elements, offering support and suggestions as needed. To check, you might ask prompting questions:

- *Where does this story take place?*
- *Do you have an image or drawing for the setting?*
- *How does the setting affect the mood of your story?*
- *Can you write another sentence describing the conflict to make sure it's clear?*
- *Have you decided how to divide the speaking roles during the presentation?*

12. After the poster preparations are complete, guide the class through the group-presentation process, with the “audience” groups using the peer-feedback form to provide feedback to each presenting group. (Note: In large classes, for the sake of time, you may have several groups present simultaneously in different areas of the classroom to sets of three or four audience groups.)

13. After each group presents its poster and receives applause, comments, and questions from you and the class, give the audience a few minutes to complete the feedback forms. At the end of class, share the forms with the groups and then collect them so you can review and evaluate the peer-feedback process.

EXTENSION

Follow-up Writing Task

For homework after the poster presentations, ask each student to write a three-paragraph reflection on the project:

- **Paragraph one:** Summarize your group’s fictional-story poster, including the basic plot, character(s), setting, conflict, rising action, and resolution.
- **Paragraph two:** Describe your role within your group and your experience with the project. What did you contribute to the story and the poster? What did you talk about during the presentation? What did you like or dislike about the project?
- **Paragraph three:** Describe the peer feedback your group received. What did your classmates write about your group’s poster and/or your presentation? Was it helpful? Why or why not?

VARIATION

Digital-Poster Project

Modify the procedures described above to use this project idea in virtual or flipped classroom settings:

- Instead of creating a physical poster, each group will create a digital poster or brief e-slideshow. For each group of students, create a Google Slides presentation (or a similar digital-presentation format that supports collaborative editing), giving each student in the group editing permission. Name each presentation “Group 1,” “Group 2,” and so on for now; ask the groups to add their story’s title when they know what it is (for example, “Group 1 – Lost in Osaka”). Set a limit on the number of slides each group can use; this can help students keep their presentations focused (a total of four to six slides works well). Whichever digital tools and apps you decide to use—and these days, there are many to choose from—be sure to streamline the process and resources so that students don’t get “digital tool overwhelm.”
- When sharing the assignment instructions, explain that students will be working together on one digital slide presentation for their fictional-story presentation. Tell

students that they will collaborate on the presentation by using your learning management system’s virtual meeting software, Zoom meeting breakout rooms, or another free online meeting tool selected for your context.

- When meeting virtually with your class, share an example digital-poster presentation file, highlighting the required assignment components and reviewing technical features your students may not be familiar with (how to insert images, shapes, and drawings; how to change text color and font size; and so on). Suggest or demonstrate how to use open-access image databases such as Pixabay.com or Unsplash.com to locate graphics for their posters. If you prefer, you could create a short screencast video that explains the instructions and demonstrates key project components.
- Support student groups as they meet virtually. Visit each group’s meeting room to make sure that the group is on track to complete the project; ask guiding questions such as those listed in Step 11 of the Procedure section.
- Share and evaluate the presentations during a whole-class virtual meeting. As an alternative, student groups can record their presentations, and “audience” students can watch and provide peer feedback on a selection of the presentation videos.

REFERENCE

Vari, T. J. 2020. Teaching the elements of literature using stories from infancy to age-appropriate. Yale National Initiative to strengthen teaching in public schools. https://teachers.yale.edu/curriculum/viewer/initiative_06.03.02_u

Nicholas Gordon is an Outreach Coordinator with English Language Programs. He has taught in South Korea, Saudi Arabia, New York City, and Ukraine. As an English Language Fellow in Ukraine, 2017–2019, he served as the Director of the English Writing Center at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

THE LIGHTER SIDE





... 20, 21 ...

The year 2021 is made up of two consecutive numbers: 20 and 21. Below are clues to other pairs of consecutive numbers. However, every clue has a blank. First, complete each clue by filling in the blank with a word from the List. Then, write the number that the clue describes. Last, write the pairs of consecutive numbers at the bottom. One pair has been completed, as an example.

List (Use these words to fill in the blanks in the Clues.)

average	dots	letters	sides
backwards	highest	months	strings
century	legs	more	sum
clues	less	planets	years

Clues

- The number that is one more than a dozen = 13
- The number of _____ that three spiders have = ____
- The number of _____ in the solar system (not counting Pluto) = ____
- The number of _____ before z in the alphabet = ____
- The number of _____ that 33 triangles have = ____ 
- The number of _____ on a guitar = ____
- The sum of $7+7$ = 14
- The number of _____ in this puzzle = ____ 
- The number of _____ that come before June each year = ____
- The number of years in a _____ = ____
- The _____ number that has only one syllable = ____
- The number that is one _____ than a dozen = ____
- The total number of _____ on two dice = ____ 
- The number of _____ a person is a teenager = ____
- The _____ of 15 and 19 = ____
- Counting _____ from 50, the eighth number = ____ 

Pairs of Consecutive Numbers (These can be written in any order.)

13 and 14 _____ and _____ _____ and _____ _____ and _____
 _____ and _____ _____ and _____ _____ and _____ _____ and _____

Answers to *THE LIGHTER SIDE*

... 20, 21 ...

Clues	
1. more = 13	2. legs = 24
3. planets = 8	4. letters = 25
5. sides = 99	6. strings = 6
7. sum = 14	8. clues = 16
Pairs of Consecutive Numbers	
(can be in any order)	
5 and 6	16 and 17
7 and 8	24 and 25
11 and 12	42 and 43
13 and 14	99 and 100
[Note: The next year that contains consecutive numbers will be ... 2122!]	